Honoring The Life Of

James Harry DuBose

June 25, 1931 – August 1, 2025

Monday, August 18, 2025
Family Hour 11:00 AM
Homegoing Celebration 12 Noon

Oasis of Hope Christian Church
933 W. 7 Mile Rd.
Detroit, Mi 48203

Pastor Claude A. May, Officiating

The Life and Memories of James Harry DuBose

"I was called James, Harry, Dad, Daddy, Daddy-O, Granddaddy, G-Pa, Grandpa Harry, and Uncle Harry! I loved them all. I was born on June 25th, 1931, in rural Choctaw County, Butler, Alabama, to the blessed union of Willie DuBose and Laura Williams. I was number five out of ten children. I grew up around a large extended family, which included my grandmother, Fredonia (Turner) DuBose-we called her "Grandma Donie"; and my grandparents, Timothy Williams and Hannah (Compton) Williams-we called her "Grandma Hannah." I kept so many fond memories of growing up around Butler and Mt. Sterling, Alabama. Every Sunday morning, my mother would get my sisters Geneva and Andralean ready for church, and my father would help us boys get dressed.

One of our neighbors would often notice "Papa" running across the field to make sure we got to Sunday School on time. Grandma Hannah always kept the entire pew in front of her open so that all her grandkids could sit there. The ushers knew that no one could sit there! That put something in me at an early age – being a part of the church, serving God and helping people." James did this for his entire life: serving, working, and helping family, friends, and neighbors! He spent his early years of schooling in Alabama until his family moved to Carmichael in Clarke County, Mississippi, in the late 1930s. "My father backed a school bus up to our house and had us load all of our belongings onto the bus. We lived a life of sharecropping on the big Keeton Farm. We were allowed to live in a huge house and work the land. As a young kid in the 1940s, I had quite a few important jobs. My brother Willie and I had to get up very early each morning to go with our mother to another house on the land. We had to make cornbread and prepare milk to feed the many hunting dogs that Papa cared for, and fix breakfast for all of us and a few other children that lived nearby.

For another job, I had to walk the white kids to school and then ride the bus to school myself. At one point, I also worked for Becton's General Store in Carmichael, Mississippi where I sorted the mail for the U.S. Post Office and distributed it to the town's residents when they came in, and also helped them find other items in the store. In the next town over, Shubuta, my mother owned a cafe on the main road through town. My job was to prepare breakfast sandwiches for all the railroad workers. I knew exactly what each worker wanted, and had their orders ready when they arrived. Then, many of the young white workers from the local stores would come in to order breakfast. They'd each give me a little tip."

"I was the Valedictorian of my eighth-grade graduating class. I was so loved by the community that many of the white residents came to the ceremony and gave me gifts after I gave my speech. In 1951, I graduated from Shirley Owens Vocational High School in Quitman, Mississippi. The week after graduation, I moved to Omaha, Nebraska to stay with my uncle, Lesane "Bertie" Williams. There I worked as a Shoeshine Helper for my uncle, and then as a Janitor for Central Market, Omaha's largest grocery store. It was while in Omaha that I wrote and recorded a blues song, "Mean Mistreater." I was offered a recording contract, and the owner of Central Market planned for me to travel to New York to sign the paperwork. At the same time, my classmate, Obie Johnson, came to visit me and invited me to stop through Detroit and fill out an application at the General Motors plant where he had just been hired. This was in 1953. I visited the plant and was hired immediately. I never made it to New York."

The Life and Memories of James Harry DuBose

James' first twenty years of his life was filled with hard, diligent work and commitment to helping his parents. At the age of 23, during a vacation from the auto plant, James took a trip back to Pachuta, Mississippi where he and his 20-year-old sweetheart, Marcella (Jones), got married on September 18th, 1954. They returned to Detroit and began to raise a family. He returned to work for Chevrolet until his retirement. Along the way, as an entrepreneur, he started a janitorial business, and served as a CPA, preparing taxes for his friends and others in the community. He and his young family were early members of Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church, where he served as a Deacon and an Usher for many years. He was Deacon Emeritus at Oasis of Hope Christian Church.

Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee (Exodus 20:12)—this is how James lived! He recalled stories of people telling him that he was going to be just like his father, because when they saw "Mr. Willie", (as the white community called him), James was by his side. His cooking skills were developed the same way. James had a love for baking; he learned this craft by being at his mother's side in the kitchen daily as a young kid, and then passed it down to future generations. Friends and family were always looking for one of his cakes on birthdays and holidays. He also gave his own kids the gift of music—all four of them were required to take piano lessons. It was a surprise later in life to find out that he played the piano himself.

He loved spending time with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. His love for them was always on display, captured in the many photos that show his big smile. In an interview with his great-grandson Rahsaan, he said his greatest achievement was "graduating from High School and taking some college courses."

In the neighborhood, he could've been called "The Watchman", because he knew the names and situations of almost everyone on the block. When someone was sick, he and/or Marcella would go and see about them. When he could no longer physically go, you could find him sitting on the porch making his phone calls to see how people were doing. James was a serious thinker and such a great listener, but he also had a special way of talking about things that would make you laugh! His retirement years were filled with the same dedication he had in his early years-helping and serving others, his own wife and family always being first.

After a full life of 94 years, on August 1st, 2025, God allowed James to make his transition, on his own terms, in Detroit, Michigan. He was preceded in death by his wife of 55 years, Marcella DuBose; his parents, Willie and Laura DuBose; siblings and their wives, Belovet (Edna), Ledell Sr.(Verna/Annie), Isaac (Ella), Geneva (Fred), Andralean (Woodrow), Eugene (Gloria), Fred, and Edward (Gloria); son-in-law, Keith Jenkins; grandsons Keith Jenkins, Jr. and Keith Marquis Jenkins; He leaves to cherish his memories, his brother, Willie "Knot" (Classie) DuBose. His legacy and memories will continue on through his children: Alford (Shelia) DuBose, Jeffrey (Pamela) DuBose, Michael (Demetria) DuBose, and Moniek DuBose Jenkins; grandchildren: Alfred ("L.A."), En'Janique, Julius, Shakeira, Michael Jr., Kadesh, Jasmine, Achante, Kevin, Berachah, Asia; great-grandchildren: Da'Nai, Zhané, Ariyanna, Haiden, Athena, Paris, Rhasaan, Ethan, Janae, Karter, Christian, Zora, and Arlo. As well as a host of nieces, nephews and cousins; goddaughters Diana Tucker, Tonya Johnson and Jeri Streety; a caretaker and neighbor, Lucille Johnson; his church family; a host of many friends, neighbors; and the lives of all those he touched.

Order of Service

Monday, August 18th, 2025
Pastor Claude A. May, Officiating

Processional.....Family

Musical Selection.....Shakeira DuBose

Old Testament Scripture.....Pastor Greg Henderson
Oasis of Hope Chrisitian Church

New Testament Scripture.....Rev. Fred Jennings, Jr.
Oasis of Hope Chrisitian Church

Prayer.....Pastor Ryan Johnson
Greater Burnette Baptist Church

Musical Selection.....Michael DuBose, Sr.

Acknowledgement of Cards,
Telegrams, & Resolutions.....Sis. Nicole Bentley

Reading of the Obituary.....Sis. Nicole Bentley

Remarks.....Family/Friends (2 min.)

Musical Selection.....Alfred DuBose, Jr.

Eulogy.....Pastor Claude A. May

Recessional.....

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:
John 11:25

Love & Gratitude

"Daddy-O, I was blessed to be your first-born man-child, and I was by your side as you finished your last years. So many lessons learned and so many years filled with fun, travel, and the joy of being around you–I have so many wonderful memories to keep in my heart. Rest with Mom now. I Love You and will miss you greatly" -Alford

"DAD, I was blessed to have you with me for 68 of your 94 years. You were the foundation upon which I built my life and I want to thank you for your love and guidance. God decided it was time to take away your pain and reunite you with Mom. I will always love and miss you and hope that one day I will be with you and Mom again." Love You Always and Forever, Jeffrey

"Thank you, Dad, for showing me how to be a caring, kind, and hard-working family man. That one trip that you and I took together when you drove me to Tennessee State University my freshman year was the best. I will miss our Sunday evening phone conversations. I learned so much more about you, and that will help me as I continue to grow in years." Love, your Baby Boy, Michael.

"Dear Daddy, there are three stories that come to mind as I was writing this: my mother used to always tell me when I was 4 years old, that somehow I knew the time you were coming home from work and would sit your house shoes by the door. And one day, you worked overtime and did not come home, and I just had this weird look on my face but didn't cry. I just picked up the house shoes and took them back to the bedroom.

You did not like dogs, but I wanted one so bad and you always spoiled me, so I got my doggie and named her Pebbles, and you got attached to her.

When I got pregnant, I didn't know how to tell you, so I just showed you my prenatal vitamins and you were not mad. You just said, "when my grandbaby gone be here?" and you ended up spoiling Shakeira way more than you spoiled me. I was bad sometimes, but you never whipped me, and I turned out to be a pretty good woman, I must say. I could go on and on, but to sum it up: you were the best father, grandfather and great-grandfather any daughter could ever ask for, and I love you with my whole heart and will miss you so much." Love, your daughter Moniek

"Dad, God blessed me with the BEST Father-in-Love, & example of a loving father that I wasn't able to experience before marriage to your awesome son Michael. I'm glad that I verbally expressed this to you over the years. I'll hold dear all of the conversations we had, including the many that were recorded. Your last words to me: "I'm gonna be alright" and, "I'm praying for you too" are ever in my heart." Love, Demetria

"To my GPA: Thank you for being our patriarch. The boys and I were truly blessed to have you in our lives. We will forever be grateful for the stories shared of long ago, and the times spent in your presence. You fought a good fight, but God was ready for you to come home. Well done GPA!!!" Love, En'Janique (granddaughter), Rahsaan and Karter (great-grandsons)

"I will forever be amazed at the level of unconditional love, compassion, understanding and forgiveness you showed me my entire life; and how you taught me to embrace those traits and bestow them upon others myself. You will forever be my model of long-suffering, patience, kindness and will forever stand as a monument of God's Love for me. I will certainly miss our iconic hassling sessions. I love you and I'll see you soon, Mr. Sanford." Love, L.A.

"My 35th birthday party was the best surprise anyone could ask for. It wasn't the food, or the music or the fun—it was the memories of you walking in the door, Grandpa. It literally made my day and made my heart smile. Thanks for always showing me and my family unconditional love…I will live life to make you proud. And to keep making your delicious punch, that you personally approved." Love you always, Mike D. (grandson)

Love & Gratitude

"Grandpa, I know there's never a point to say goodbye to someone— you always carry a piece of them with you. Every time someone comments on my voice reaching a high pitch, or any conversation where I mention being "third generation union", or every time I tell the story of how my family came from the South to Detroit— I know where it comes from. Pieces of you are forever within me. I love you and will miss seeing you here on Earth. Thanks for being the only Grandparent I got a picture of on film. I am glad for a life full of blessings and memories." Love, Kadesh (grandson)

"My favorite memory is when we visited him in 2019, and he was sitting on the porch talking to someone. When we walked up, I asked who was that, was that a neighbor? And he was like: "I don't know who that man was." It made me laugh, and he shared how they'd sat talking for hours and hours. I just enjoyed sitting with him, hearing his stories and enjoying his calmness and kindness. He was a great man." Love, Adell (granddaughter in-law)

"He was a kind and loving man who lived a long and meaningful life. I'm grateful to have called him granddaddy. He is loved and missed very much " Love, Jasmine (granddaughter)

"Grandaddy, my angel, your love, strength, and gentle spirit will forever live within me. Though you're gone, I feel you guiding me from above, and I'll carry you in my heart always." xoxo, Zhané, Janae, and Christian (great-granddaughters, great-grandson)

"Grandpa, when I was a kid and we talked on the phone, you'd always ask me if my suitcase was packed so I could come and live with you. It never failed to make me laugh, and when I said "no, not yet" you'd say, "alright, make sure you pack your stuff next time and I'll come get you". It was our little running joke. The week before Thanksgiving 2023, you called me out of the blue and said "Berachah, I have a request: I'd like you to make me a coconut cake for Thanksgiving", and that was that. I made sure before you went home to slip you a few extra slices for the road. It was the first time you'd tried my baked goods, and I knew you loved them. I'm going to miss your humor and your honesty most of all. I love you and miss you dearly, Grandpa!" Love, Berachah (granddaughter)

"My memory of him is when I first visited him, we talked a lot and I told him about the circus and amusement park, and he was so happy. I'm happy he was there to talk to me when I felt sad." Love, Athena (great-granddaughter)

"My memory of him is when we went to the White House with him and my whole family. And I love him and miss him, he's my best friend forever and ever." Love, Zora (great-granddaughter)

"Missing your warm presence and comforting words, rest well in your heavenly home. Love you always Grandaddy, until next time. " Love Asia, Arlo, Achante, and Haiden (granddaughters, great-grandson, great-granddaughter)

LET GO
WHITE HOUSE

Pallbearers

Daniel Gudenau

Michael DuBose Jr

Kadesh DuBose

Julius DuBose

Alfred DuBose Jr

Kevin Jenkins

Flower Bearers

Friends of The Family

Internment

Woodlawn Cemetery
19975 Woodward Ave,
Detroit, MI 48203

Final Arrangements Entrusted To

O.H. Pye Funeral Home
17600 Plymouth Rd,
Detroit, MI 48227

The family of the late James Harry DuBose acknowledges, with sincere appreciation, the many comforting messages, floral tributes, and other expressions of kindness evidenced at this time in thought and deeds. A very special thank you to the staff at Evergreen Health and Rehabilitation, who took great care of "Pa Pa" while he resided there.